



National Western Center Citizens Advisory Committee Work Session

Thursday, December 17, 2015 – Meeting Summary

1. Welcome and Introductions

Maria Garcia Berry called the meeting to order. Terrance Carroll welcomed all in attendance and noted the agenda would be somewhat lengthy with the goal of moving through it as quickly as possible while allowing for sufficient conversation.

AE explained the members who were appointed to CAC as residents met to discuss community engagement on December 12th. They drafted a document highlighting some of the things they felt were most important. The purpose of the document was to refocus and organize moving into 2016. She requested input on anything CAC members felt was missing from the list.

2. Membership Discussion

Maria Garcia Berry explained the process that was followed to verify membership of five in-question individuals after which one CAC member was removed. Prior to adding any new members, the CAC needs to determine how large it should reasonably be and what obligations it should fulfill. Currently the committee consists of 21 members, 8 of whom are neighborhood representatives. The CAC has a loosely recognized rule that if an organization does not send a primary or alternate member to three consecutive meetings, their membership is subjected to review and a letter of inquiry is sent to the organization requesting future participation and the reason for their absence.

Moving forward the CAC will need a concrete set of guidelines used to add or remove individuals from the group. It was explained to the group that Maria Garcia Berry and Terrance Carroll are not responsible for determining the membership and alternate membership process because it is something the CAC community and neighborhood members should control. Garcia Berry also stated that her concern for alternate members was not who attends as an alternate representative, just that participating organizations are clear about who is coming on a regular basis. At an upcoming CAC meeting, the process for choosing an alternate member should also be defined in terms of what is acceptable and what is not. Currently, the membership application process only requires interested members to submit a letter of intent and the expectation of consistent meeting attendance. It was made clear that more than just an expression of interest should be required for official membership because there needs to be a barrier to adding individuals who are not committed to participating on a regular basis.

3. Neighborhood/Community Representation

Anne Hayes voiced the concern neighborhood residents may lack a platform to communicate with CAC neighborhood reps other than by word of mouth. There should be a way for residents to communicate with their representatives so the input of neighborhood CAC reps accurately reflects the greater community of residents. Drew Dutcher explained efforts are underway to create an Elyria-Swansea Neighborhood Organization with the goal of registering it by January 2016. He added it has been a long and arduous process to organize those efforts so registration may be delayed. One goal Dutcher had for the organization was that it can potentially serve as a platform for neighborhood residents to communicate with the CAC neighborhood representatives. AE explained there is a kiosk at the Valdez-Perry Branch Library with information on the NWC and the CAC meetings for the general public. The kiosk serves as a bridge between neighborhood members and the CAC so that neighborhood representation reflects a larger swath of people than just the participating members.

Juan Veloz discussed some of the issues he has had in participating with Focus Points and the lack of respect he received even as a participating community leader. As a neighborhood representative on the CAC he explained it is his duty to share CAC information with other groups however the lack of respect he received at Focus Points is a deterrent to that effort and needs to be addressed.

One aspect of representation the CAC needs to discuss further is how to characterize membership for individuals who are both neighborhood residents and also representatives of participating organizations. Lilliana Amaro-Flores for example, has the unique perspective of being a resident as well as a Growhaus employee so the CAC has the responsibility to weigh and reflect on how that role is considered in the process of adding new members and ensuring there is adequate representation of each of the involved parties. AE suggested in order to simplify the representation ratio, members with dual interests should declare representation as only a resident or organization, but not both and although members with dual interests may have to declare one faction to represent, their unique perspective is welcomed as an added bonus.

For the sake of bringing closure to the membership induction process, members agreed to spread awareness through word of mouth and encourage attendance of anyone who feels they may add to the content and substance of the committee. Members will be added after having completed a letter of intent and demonstrated reasonable commitment to participating on the CAC.

Questions and Comments

- John Zapien stressed the need for more neighborhood representation on the CAC, especially moving into the 2016 calendar year. He suggested the implementation of a set ratio of neighborhood representatives to organization/community representatives.
- Maria Garcia Berry suggested the use of an alternate only apply to organizations and is not necessary for neighborhood participants.
- Vernon Hill expressed concern about making the CAC too large, which could result in some unwanted consequences. He suggested a cap on membership should be implemented after which a waiting list is created for other potential newcomers.
- John Zapien stressed the importance of quality over quantity when the CAC is considering adding new members. He would rather the committee add only a few energetic and impactful members than a large group of inductees just for the sake of satisfying a ratio.
- Carrie Atiyeh suggested the next roundup highlight the fact that CAC meetings are open to the public and encourage attendance for individuals who may want to join.

4. CSU Presentation

Jocelyn Hittle explained that although three of the facilities on campus will fall under the leadership and direction of CSU, they want to remain consistent with the principle that all spaces should be inclusive and open to different partners and uses because the new center should be a community oriented space. The three CSU facilities include the Water Resources Center, the Equine/Sports Medicine and Community Outreach Clinic, and the CSU Center. The Water Resource Center will be the first of the three CSU facilities and one of the first buildings on campus. Hittle explained CSU is interested in gathering community input in order to make the facility a dual-use space. One main aspect of the WRC is the way it interacts with the riverfront and Hittle encouraged all members to keep the relationship between the Platte and the facility in mind.

According to the architect commissioned to design the Water Resources Center, the facility will likely be tall and slender and visible anywhere on campus. Members agreed the building should be centered around the river and provide an observation space open to the public. In addition to the building itself, the neighborhood and surrounding community will be encouraged to make use of the outdoor plaza. While it was agreed the building or some exterior structure could interact with the water, Hittle warned any structure that does interact with the water should be created in an environmentally responsible way especially given the nature of the building as a center for solving water problems. Attendees were also informed Denver Water had approached CSU with an interest in collaborating on a water education center. The architect stated in addition to the community space the building will house, it may include a k-12 educational outreach center as well.

The design of the plaza and open space poses challenges distinct from those faced in the design of the actual WRC building. While it will be necessary for the space to be open and able to accommodate to different events, it will also be important for the plaza to include some more intimate spaces aimed at attracting pedestrians and site visitors. Some of the exterior features may also include a play space for children or a water feature that allows for pedestrian interaction similar to the one in front of Union Station. Another challenge faced in the design process is creating outdoor space that doesn't require excessive year-round maintenance.

Hittle explained she has drafted a list of the Water Resource Center suggestions made by attendees and would be back at an upcoming meeting with a more concrete outline before submitting it to the CSU board of governors for approval. She encouraged meeting attendees to send her more ideas if they think of anything new prior to the January meeting.

Suggestions/Discussion

- John Zapien suggested an effort be made as a part of the water project to address the groundwater contamination in the neighborhood and the surrounding community with the goal of determining a strategy for cleaning it up. Hittle agreed there is potential to work with the city to cleanup groundwater in the areas surrounding the NWC with future sustainability in mind. There is also huge potential for CSU to turn the contamination and remediation into an educational opportunity.
- For the WRC, AE suggested technology be integrated both internally and externally and be capable of having projection of art and/or information on the exterior of the building to cater to various events.
- David Oletski suggested the Water Resources Center have a restaurant.
- Vernon Hill floated the idea of integrating an outdoor amphitheater in the area.
- Heather Lafferty suggested the building include an indoor meeting space and/or conference room that may be reserved for various groups and organizations who are interested in using the space.
- Maria Garcia Berry stressed how important it will be for the Water Resource center to remain true to its original purpose of solving water issues and suggested the building include an interactive/educational feature focused primarily on the importance of water to the state from a historical and legal perspective.
- It was the general consensus was that the ground floor and potentially the top floor be devoted to community space while the middle floors be devoted to water resources.

- John Zapien expressed his hope the site pays homage to the ancestry and culture of those who have settled in the area and made it what it is today.

5. NDCC Update

Kelly Leid highlighted some of the major achievements the CAC has achieved in the last 30 months including the Globeville Plan and the Elyria-Swansea Plan, which enabled the city and NWC partners to get an idea of what the neighborhoods wanted for the new center. Both of the neighborhood plans laid the groundwork to form the National Western Plan. Much of the last three years have been dedicated to fund acquisition, gaining voter approval and approval of legislation on items like HB 1344, without which the new NWC would not be able to exist.

Leid notified attendees he is transitioning out of his role as head of the NDCC and into a new position as head of the NWC project. Under Leid's direction, the new branch will be able to put their efforts solely into the NWC project however it will still receive help in collaboration with the NDCC.

While the last few years have centered on planning work, the 2016 calendar year will finally include implementation of heavily planned affairs such as rail consolidation and land acquisition, which are expected to take several years. In the upcoming months Leid's team will be pursuing land acquisition more aggressively. Specifically, they are presenting Denver City Council with a land acquisition ordinance, which will be reviewed in December, and then take a few weeks before it is approved and signed. Beginning in January, notices of intent to acquire land for NWC will be sent to property owners on the campus.

Although rail consolidation and land acquisition are expected to take several years to complete, Leid explained the NWC has the potential to host several events in the meantime to boost excitement for the new center. The EOC and EPAS are responsible for determining what kinds of events the NWC is able to host in the next few years that activate both the current site and the surrounding neighborhoods.

6. Attendance

Maria Garcia Berry (Co Facilitator)
 Terrance Carroll (Co-Facilitator)
 Paul Andrews (NWSS)
 Kelly Leid (NDCC)
 Albus Brooks (Denver Councilman)
 AE (Globeville)
 John Zapien (Globeville)
 Betty Cram (Elyria-Swansea)
 Drew Dutcher (Elyria-Swansea)
 Juan Veloz (Elyria-Swansea)

David Oletski (GCA)
 Anne Hayes (Westfield)
 John Olson (Historic Denver)
 Heather Lafferty (Habitat for Humanity)
 Jocelyn Hittle (CSU)
 Per Hogestad (CSU)
 Carrie Atiyeh (VISIT Denver)
 Larry Burgess (Platte Partners)
 Patricia Carmody (Riverside Cemetery)
 Vernon Hill (JJJ Properties)